Created in 2004 from research conducted at the Ecology Laboratory of the UCLouvain, Viridaxis produces parasitoids to combat the aphids that affect the sheltered crops of horticulturalists. This is a major technological innovation and a promising alternative to synthetic pesticides that disrupt biodiversity and harm human health.



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Innovation and Technology

95% of organic or sustainable growers who grow crops in tunnels or greenhouses use products at least in part. One billion insects are marketed each year in 60 countries, 70-75% of them in the European Union. This is a real success for this company of 45 employees, which has an annual turnover of €10 million. It owes this success to a technology that is unique in the world, first developed at UCLouvain and then by its own research team. This technology has enabled the company to develop a robust system for efficiently multiplying very high-quality parasitoids.

Mode of Action

The mode of action is as follows: the parasitoid lays an egg in the aphid. The egg becomes a larva which feeds on the inside of the aphids. After approximately ten days, the larva weaves a cocoon and then produces a mummy from which emerges an adult, a 2 to 3 mm flying insect whose antennae enable it to locate aphids in crops. This is far more effective than the search system of predators such as ladybirds. In addition, the

production method does not involve plants, but rather nutrient solutions, colors, and odors, which ensures that very high constant quality parasitoids multiply within two weeks. This ensures that the parasitoids are always available. This is a boon for growers who are subject to fluctuating weather conditions.

Parasitoid Production

Viridaxis is able to multiply half of the hundreds of aphid parasitoids that exist, but it regularly produces ten or so that are particularly interesting for insect control and markets six in particular:

- Aphidius colemani
- Aphidius ervi
- Aphidius matricariae
- Aphelinus abdominalis
- Praon volucre
- Ephedrus cerasicola

They can be marketed separately (per species) when the aphid species is already known to the grower, or as a cocktail to control all aphid species on a given crop – like FresaProtect for strawberries. Parasitoids can be used as a preventive or curative measure, but it is better to prevent than to spend more afterwards!

Future Developments

Viridaxis is currently working on three major R&D projects with three objectives: to develop new technologies targeting other types of insects, to find insects to effectively control other pests, and to bring about tests to develop products for open crops. More than ever, Viridaxis is listening to horticulturists to develop insects of high quality, high availability, and high flexibility. In this way, the company actively contributes to reducing the use of chemical pesticides. For the benefit of all living things.



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